What is claimed is:

1. A computerized method for authenticating a diagnostic code, the method comprising:

    receiving a diagnostic code for a component of a computer system; and

    generating an authentication code associated with the diagnostic code.

2. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein generating the authentication code comprises encoding a date value into the authentication code.

3. The computerized method of claim 1 wherein generating the authentication code comprises encoding a serial number into the authentication code.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the serial number is a computer system serial number.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein the serial number is a serial number for a hardware component of a computer system.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a file of valid authentication codes and wherein generating the authentication code comprises selecting the authentication code from the file of valid authentication codes.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the authentication code is selected according to a date.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein generating the authentication code comprises receiving the authentication code from a server.

9. A computerized system for authenticating a diagnostic code, the system comprising:

a diagnostic module operable to perform a diagnostic on a component of a computer system and to produce a diagnostic code; and

an authentication code generation module operable to generate an authentication code associated with the diagnostic code.

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10. The system of claim 9, wherein the authentication code generation module is further operable to retrieve a serial number and encode the serial number into the authentication code.

10 11. The system of claim 10 wherein the serial number is associated with a computer system.

12. The system of claim 10 wherein the serial number is associated with a component of a computer system.

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13. The system of claim 9 wherein the authentication code generation module is further operable to encode a current time into the authentication code.

14. The system of claim 9 wherein the authentication code generation module is 20 further operable to obtain the authentication code from an authentication code server.

15. A computer-readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing a method for authenticating a diagnostic code, the method comprising:

receiving a diagnostic code for a component of a computer system; and

25 generating an authentication code associated with the diagnostic code.

16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein generating the authentication code comprises encoding a date value into the authentication code.

30 17. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein generating the authentication code comprises encoding a serial number into the authentication code.

18.   The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the serial number is a computer system serial number.

5   19.   The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the serial number is a serial number for a hardware component of a computer system.

20.   The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises receiving a file of valid authentication codes and wherein generating the

10   authentication code comprises selecting the authentication code from the file of valid authentication codes.

21.   The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the authentication code is selected according to a date.

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22.   The computer-readable medium of claim 15, wherein generating the authentication code comprises receiving the authentication code from a server.